

Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development

Annual Report 2010-2011



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MINISTER'S LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

To the Honourable H. Frank Lewis
Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward
Island

Your Honour:

I have the honour to submit herewith the
Annual Report of the Department of
Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural
Development for the fiscal year ended
March 31, 2011.

I have the honour to be your obedient
servant,

Honorable H. Frank Lewis Lieutenant-
gouverneur de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard

Votre Honneur,

J'ai l'honneur de soumettre sous ce pli le
rapport annuel du ministère des Pêches, de
l'Aquaculture et du Développement rural
pour l'année financière se terminant le 31
mars 2011.

Respectueusement soumis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil J. LeClair".

Neil J. LeClair

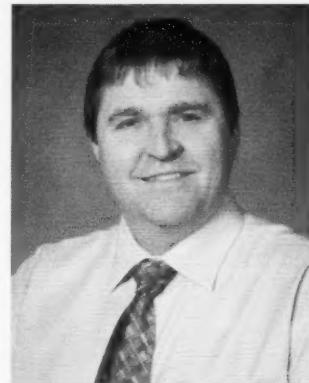
Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development
Ministre des Pêches, de l'Aquaculture et du Développement rural

DEPUTY MINISTER'S OVERVIEW

To the Honourable Neil J. LeClair
Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development

Dear Minister:

It is my pleasure to present the 2010-11 Annual Report for the Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development. This report provides an overview of work achieved to reach department goals for the period April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011.



The 2010-11 fiscal year was another landmark year for the department as staff settled into the new headquarters in Montague. Some highlights included the significant progress that was made to address the constraints on the lobster fishery with new markets being pursued in North America, Europe and Asia and partnerships with industry and the federal government to implement sustainability plans in our lobster fishing areas. Progress was made in our aquaculture sector and confidence was gained through the development of new technologies to manage invasive species. Numerous actions were implemented under the Rural Action Plan and PEI's first Rural Action Centres were opened to help coordinate provincial and federal services to rural businesses and community organizations across the Island. The department placed a greater focus to enhance customer service at our eight (8) Access PEI sites across the province.

It is my pleasure to serve as Deputy Minister for the department responsible to implement programs and services to our wide range of clients that includes fishers, aquaculturists, seafood buyers and processors, community groups, municipalities, economic development organizations and those Islanders that use the services at Access PEI.

The department remains committed to its mandate to contribute to the growth of sustainable, prosperous fishing, aquaculture and seafood processing enterprises and provide policy leadership in developing new approaches to rural community development, service delivery and employment programs, the majority of which are rural-based.

I wish to acknowledge the dedicated employees of the department who remain committed to delivering quality programs and services to Islanders.

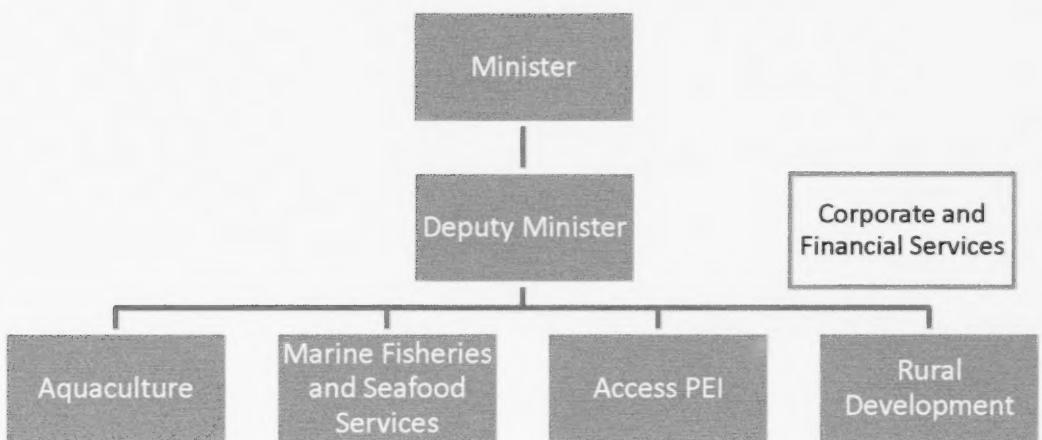
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Gallant".

Richard Gallant,
Deputy Minister

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Department of Fisheries,
Aquaculture and Rural Development



2010/2011 EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES

Division	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Actual Expenditure/Revenue
EXPENDITURE BUDGET			
Department Management	\$607,200	\$610,900	\$625,165
Marine Fisheries and Seafood Services	\$2,043,700	\$2,115,300	\$1,659,133
Aquaculture Division	\$1,273,600	\$1,315,200	\$1,249,935
Single Window Service	\$2,727,300	\$2,721,500	\$2,573,827
Community Development	\$6,705,400	\$8,055,500	\$6,875,634
Total	\$13,357,200	\$14,818,400	\$12,983,694
REVENUE BUDGET			
Department Revenue	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$46,134
Total	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$46,134
TOTAL NET	\$13,312,200	\$14,773,400	\$12,937,560



CORPORATE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Corporate and Financial Services Division is responsible for providing management services within the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development. Services include both financial administration and human resource management for both departments.

The mandate of the division is to support the effective management of the departments through the delivery of key corporate services. In this capacity, the division works closely with the Minister's offices and the divisions within the two departments.

The following table outlines the primary management functions performed by the Corporate and Financial Services Division:

Responsibility Area	Management Functions
Financial Administration	Fiscal management and budgetary control; financial reporting and analysis, financial administration and accounting services; records management
Human Resource Management	Human Resource planning; benefits, staffing, payroll, and labour relations

HUMAN RESOURCES:

The Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development is committed to the development and sustainability of its human resources. In December, 2010 the department endorsed its Human Resources Plan for 2011 - 2014. The plan recognizes that a highly skilled professional workforce is necessary to achieve the strategic goals of the department. The planning process was to ensure alignment of human resources with the strategic plan.

This year the Human Resource Division focused on implementation of the HR Plan and ensuring that staff were heard through initiatives identified in the 2010 staff survey. The importance of staff recognition was identified by the Employee Network Team as a priority. In Spring 2011, the Department's first Recognition Plan was established.

As identified in the Human Resource Plan, the department continued its commitment to employee development. Throughout the fiscal year, and with departmental financial contributions, employees participated in continued educational programs such as Masters, post-secondary degrees and certificate programs.

The rate of recruitment activities remained neutral for 2010-2011. Due to impending retirement of baby boomers, which is expected to have an impact on our workforce, the department has identified succession planning as one of its priorities in the next few years.

During this fiscal year, the department was challenged with the departure of five (5) employees due to retirements. This has been a huge loss of corporate knowledge as key staff members left the Department. Attracting and keeping skilled and dedicated employees is critically important in delivering the quality programs that are offered by the Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development.

Position Establishment (as of March 31, 2011)

	Full Time	Part Time	Total
Minister's Office	4	0	4
Aquaculture	8	2	10
Marine Fisheries & Seafood Services	9	2	11
Access PEI	48	0	48
Rural Development	16	1	17
Total	85	5	90

In addition to the above established permanent positions, the department employed 29 casuals, 9 PSC temporaries and 3 students.

MARINE FISHERIES AND SEAFOOD SERVICES DIVISION

The division's mission is to provide quality advice, assistance and information to clients, as well as advocate on behalf of the marine fisheries industry with the goal to support the development of the fishing industry in a sustainable manner.

Marine Fisheries Section

The main role of the Marine Fisheries Section is to represent the interests of Prince Edward Island within the federal advisory committee process and to assist the Island fishing industry to represent their views fairly and fully.

Lobster Resource Monitoring Program

The Lobster Resource Monitoring Program continued with the collection of data on the Island's lobster resource through volunteer index fishermen recording daily information in logbooks. At-sea sampling also took place with department staff collecting information on board commercial fishing vessels. Over 100 fishermen participated in the program.



Lobster Research

In 2010, during at-sea sampling, staff continued with the tagging of female lobster that were returned to the water during the commercial fishery as required by the prohibited size range (115-129 mm) set out in the 2010 management plan. It is anticipated that the recapture of these lobsters during subsequent fishing activity will offer a better understanding of the movement of these lobsters.

A collaborative project involving the department, Fisheries and Oceans Science, and members of the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association saw 180 lobster larval collectors placed in six locations in 2010. The locations were in waters adjacent to Skinner's Pond, Northport, Covehead, Fortune, Murray River and Nine Mile Creek. These collectors provided suitable habitat for lobster larvae to settle with the hope that a settlement index per location may be developed over time. This year was the second year for collector deployment.

The department, Fisheries and Oceans Science, and the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association also continued the second of a two year project to investigate the performance of several biodegradable components for lobster traps that would ensure that lost fishing gear does not continue to catch lobster.

The department continued its financial support to the Atlantic Veterinary College's Lobster Science Centre. The department also contributed to the Centre's project entitled, "Atlantic Lobster Moult & Quality Project".

Lobster Management

The 2010 Lobster Management Plan for the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence, including LFAs 24 and 26A, was a rollover of the 2009 plan. The Management Plan measures were maintained for the 2010 season, which were a minimum legal carapace size of 70 mm and the prohibited size range of 115 to 129 mm whereby all female lobsters in that range were to be returned to the water. At the request of LFA 26A fishers in Prince Edward Island, a requirement for fishers to string a minimum of six lobster traps per line was continued in 2010 after its implementation in 2007. This measure is only for a portion of water

adjacent to Prince Edward Island in LFA 26A. Further to a request by a portion of LFA 24 harvesters to address the concentration of lobster fishing effort within portions of the LFA and until discussions between DFO and stakeholders can occur, DFO did not authorize the reissuance of any lobster licence between any home ports within LFA 24. This measure was in effect until December 31, 2010.

The 2010 lobster fishery management plan for LFA 25 included the following management measures; a minimum legal carapace size of 70 mm, a maximum size of 114 mm for females, a mandatory height of 40 mm for escape mechanisms required on traps, a maximum size for entrance hoops in traps was a diameter of 152 mm, and the possession of lobster and fishing gear was prohibited between 9:00 p.m. and one hour before sunrise. The regulated opening date was 6:00 am August 9, 2010 and the last day of fishing was October 10, 2011. Further to a request by harvesters in LFA 25 from PEI and until further notice, the maximum number of traps per fisher was reduced from 250 to 240. DFO provided tags for 2,000 traps to the Prince County Fishermen's Association and a trap transfer program was implemented to help fishers partially fund their sustainability plan.

The Prince County Fishermen's Association received \$3 million from the Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Atlantic Lobster Sustainability Program to partially fund measures outlined in their sustainability plan and for fleet rationalization. In conjunction with these funds, the Association borrowed an additional \$3 million from the Province, to be paid back through a trap transfer program, and as a result were able to retire 34 lobster licenses from LFA 25 PEI.

The department provided funds to LFA 26A Restructuring Inc. and to Lobster Fishing Area 24 Sustainability Partnership Inc., to assist in the development of sustainability plans and funding proposals for their lobster fishing areas.

Prince Edward Island Lobster Industry Roundtable

The Prince Edward Island Lobster Industry Roundtable continued in 2010. The Roundtable, made up of representatives of the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association, Prince Edward Island Seafood Processors Association, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, First Nations, and several independent lobster fishermen and processors ensured that the views and concerns of the Prince Edward Island lobster industry remain the focus of policy discussions and decision making of the provincial government.

Future Fisher Program

The department recognized the need to help young fishers seeking to enter the lobster industry. The Future Fisher Program was launched with a \$100,000 investment from the department for 2009-2010. In 2010/2011, the program assisted 22 new entrants to the fishery with services ranging from mentoring and training to interest relief.

Lobster Landings

Catches for the 2010 season were approximately 15 million pounds in LFA 24; 5 million pounds in LFA 26A; 4 million pounds for LFA 25, for a record total of 23.8 million pounds. The 2010 landings were 1.4 million lbs. higher than the overall 2009 landings.

The spring season opened on April 30 and closed on June 30. Canner prices started at \$3.25 and market prices were \$3.50.



These prices remained the same throughout the spring fishery. Fall prices were \$3.00 for canners and \$3.50 for markets.

Toad Crab

In 2010, eleven commercial licence holders were eligible to fish in the sub-zone from Covehead Harbour to East Point. The management measures for 2010 included a season of July 9 to September 25 and a minimum carapace size of 60 mm. However, due to poor market demand and the high cost of fishing, there were no toad crab landings in 2010.

Rock Crab

2010 landings of rock crab were approximately 2,090 metric tonnes (mt) with a landed value of \$1.9 million. These landings included crab landed in the directed rock crab fisheries and crab retained as a by-catch during the lobster fisheries. The range in price for rock crab was \$0.25 - \$0.40 per pound.

Fishermen remain concerned with Fisheries and Oceans Canada's removal of conditions previously in place to control the retention of rock crab during the lobster fishery. Fishers were concerned over the amount and size of rock crab landed as by-catch and would like to see a return of the conditions for daily limits, and minimum legal sizes. The department will continue to support fishers in their effort to resolve this issue.

There were 43 Prince Edward Island rock crab fisher licences and two First Nations allocations in Area 26A. Each licence is allowed a quota of 24 mt. The 2010 fishery opened on August 2 and closed on November 27, and Prince Edward Island fishermen landed 1218 mt.

In Area 25, the first season began on June 26 and ended July 24 while the second season began on October 16 and ended on November 27. There were 23 Prince Edward Island licence holders and three First Nations allocations. Each Prince Edward Island fisher had a quota of 25 mt. The landing in this area for Prince Edward Island in 2010 was 690 mt.

Area 24 had 16 fishers with permits, one licence holder and five First Nations participants. There was no individual or overall quota in this area and landings in 2010 were 182 mt.

Bluefin Tuna

For the 2010 bluefin tuna season, the Prince Edward Island tuna industry agreed on a conservation harvesting plan for its allocation of 132.15 mt of the Canadian inshore bluefin tuna quota. In the spring of 2010, the PEIFA conducted a mail-out questionnaire to determine how the fishery would be managed. There were three options on the season opening. The majority of fishers opted for a single season, beginning on October 4th. There were 294 active PEI tuna fishers this year, up from 287 in 2009. As a result of the high level of effort, and apparent abundance of the resource, the quota was caught in two days, with 391 fish landed. The PEIFA Tuna Advisory Board attributed depressed landing prices to the high catch rates in a short period of time, despite the high quality of the tuna. Prices ranged from \$2 - \$20, with the majority between \$5- \$10.



The PEI tuna industry held a workshop in March 2011 to review its management plan for this fishery to maximize the value of the bluefin.

A motion was passed to manage the 2011 fishery on a one tag per license for the season, with a review of remaining quota on October 13 by the Tuna Advisory Board.

Final figures showed a total of 131.56 mt landed, with an average weight of 744 lbs.

2010	
North Lake	62
North Rustico	19
Tignish	90
Sea Cow Pond	55
Naufrage	27
Northport	24
Red Head	23
Souris	5
Skinners Pond	1
Savage Harbour	16
Machon's Point	49
TOTAL	371

Average round weight = 744 pounds

Charter Boat Fishery

The tuna charter boat (hook and release) fishery began in mid-July. Over a 13 week period, 81 charter trips were reported with 49 successful hook-ups. The Province assisted in the catch and release study in which 20 tuna fishers tagged 59 giant bluefin to determine the mortality rate from a catch and release sport fishery.

On April 20th, a major oil disaster took place in the Gulf of Mexico during the timing of bluefin tuna's spawning period. The development captured international attention and received considerable discussion in Prince Edward Island.

Premier's Tuna Cup Award

Doug Fraser, a tuna fisher from Alberton, was recognized for landing the largest bluefin tuna of the 2010 season at a Prince Edward Island port. Mr. Fraser was presented with the Premier's Cup by Premier Robert Ghiz. The tuna weighed 1,184 lbs or 537 kgs. The cup is awarded annually to recognize the importance of the tuna fishery to the economy and the international recognition it brings to Prince Edward Island.

4RST Atlantic Halibut

On September 2, 2010 Prince Edward Island had a one day halibut fishery for 76 active fishers. A total of 15.2 mt were landed from a quota of 23.2 mt. Landings varied from 20 kgs to over 1,000 kgs per vessel. A second harvest day was set for September 16 with another 13.3 mt landed for a total of 31.5 mt. The overage will be reconciled within the 2011 fleet quota.

Spring Herring

The 2010 Area 16 spring herring quota (southern Gulf of St. Lawrence) was cut by 500 mt to 2,000 mt. The western PEI spring herring fishery began on April 26, with the initial quota of 454 mt and a weekly boat limit of 10,206 kgs. Only 99 mt were landed prior to June 1, when all the areas combine unused quota and fish competitively within the same allocation. PEI landed 204 mt of spring herring in 2010. Fishermen received 30-40 cents /lb as bait supply was in demand.

Fall Herring

The overall fall quota was remained at 65,000 mt. The Prince Edward Island herring fishery takes place in two main areas; off North Cape in Herring Fishing Area (HFA) 16E, and Fishermen's Bank, in HFA 16G. Each HFA has its own quota and the fishers set the season. HFA 16G (Fishermen's Bank) had a quota of 8,508 mt, with 650 mt assigned for the north side and 650 mt assigned for an early fishery in July for the south side. Only 162 mt were landed in the early season on the north side, and 604 mt on the south side. This area was closed on July 22. The roe fishery opened on August 22 and closed on September 10 with 7,950 mt landed.

Western Prince Edward Island (HFA 16E) fishers had a quota of 8,692 mt, with 500 mt for a summer fishery, and 3,192 mt being allocated as an open, competitive quota for all fishers. The remaining 5,000 mt were split evenly between New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. This arrangement allowed each area to set their respective opening dates. Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick herring fishers set their respective opening date on August 22. Western Prince Edward Island fishers had daily quotas of 20,000 pounds. The total landing for HFA 16E was 9,198 mt.

The department continued to financially support PEI's two acoustic surveys in the two main fall fishing areas, Fishermen's Bank and North Cape. This data will be used to assist in determining the overall biomass of the stock.

Whelks

This new emerging fishery began in 2009 with 12 whelk permits issued across the Island to explore the feasibility of a sustainable and viable fishery. In 2010, there were eight permits and two licences issued. The fishery began in July, but landings proved to be sporadic and not conducive to market conditions. This fishery remains an exploratory fishery to collect scientific data to determine the extent of the biomass. Full dockside monitoring and at-sea observer coverage was a requirement under the exploratory fishery policy.

Gulf Shrimp

For the past number of years Prince Edward Island received a temporary allocation of Gulf Shrimp in the amount of approximately 213 mt. The shrimp is located in three areas: Sept Isles, Anticosti and Esquiman off the coast of Quebec. In 2010, Fisheries and Oceans Canada maintained the Gulf Shrimp total allowable catch and re-allocated 426 mt (1.15 percent) of the total allowable catch on a permanent basis to both Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. While this amount is almost double that of previous

years, it remains short of the 1,000 mt requested by the Prince Edward Island government and Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association at the annual Shrimp Advisory meeting held in Quebec.

Northern Shrimp

The 2010 total allowable catch had decreased from 2009 to 24,990 mt. Canada received 83 percent of the 3L quota. Since 2000, Prince Edward Island had been awarded a temporary allocation in 3L of 1,500 mt. The Prince Edward Island Atlantic Shrimp Corporation signed a multi-year agreement with Ocean Choice International in 2005 to fish the Prince Edward Island shrimp allocation. Proceeds are invested in projects that involve harvesters, processors and the AVC Lobster Science Centre.

Seafood Services Section

Staff of the Seafood Services Section provide advice and assistance to clients regarding maintenance of fish quality and production of quality seafood products. The section administers regulations under the *Prince Edward Island Fisheries Act* and the *Prince Edward Island Fish Inspection Act*. The section is also responsible for gathering, compiling and publishing fisheries information including statistical data relating to the maintenance and development of fishery resources.

The section also delivers development projects for the improvement of fishing ports and shellfish landing sites under provincial jurisdiction.

Licensing

The Seafood Services Section is responsible for the administration of licenses pertaining to processing, buying and peddling under the *Prince Edward Island Fisheries Act Regulations*. Fish processing licenses are divided into four categories: primary processing, secondary processing, lobster cookroom (limited to 144 square feet of processing area) and groundfish processing (limited to 750 square feet of processing area). In 2010, the department issued 48 primary processing licenses, 2 secondary processing licenses, 18 lobster cookroom licenses and six groundfish processing licenses.

Fish buying licenses are issued on a species-per-buying-station basis. The six categories are lobster, other crustaceans, groundfish, pelagic, molluscs and other fish. During 2010, the department issued 170 spring and 45 fall lobster buying licenses, 122 other crustaceans, 63 groundfish, 144 pelagic, 119 mollusc and 10 other licenses.

In addition, 73 fish peddling licenses were issued to individuals and/or companies who peddle fish to consumers throughout Prince Edward Island.

Two fisheries inspection officers were responsible for enforcing regulations under the *Prince Edward Island Fish Inspection Act* and the *Prince Edward Island Fisheries Act*.



Dead Mammal Disposal

Seafood Services Section is responsible for coordination of the removal of dead marine mammals that land on Island beaches throughout the year. The majority of these mammals are examined either in the field by personnel from the Atlantic Veterinary College, or in some cases, the carcasses are transported to the Atlantic Veterinary College for post mortem examination.

Staff worked closely with Fish and Wildlife Conservation Officers of the Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry in the disposal of carcasses. The cost for disposal of dead mammals is the responsibility of the department and the amount depends on the size, location and condition of the carcass.

Environment officials approve locations for burial of dead carcasses and a local contractor or individual carries out the work of disposal. The Seafood Services Section coordinated the removal of approximately 11 seals and dolphins and two whales during 2010-2011.

Shellfish Landing Sites

The Seafood Services Section is responsible for the maintenance of approximately 50 shellfish landing sites in various rivers and bays throughout the province. There are continuous erosion problems on the coastline and contractors are hired periodically to provide gravel and shale in order to ensure that shellfishers have access to the shellfish producing areas.

Seafood Market Initiatives

Seafood Market Information Officer

The department, in collaboration with Innovation PEI as well as Agriculture and AgriFood Canada, participated in incoming seafood buyer missions, hosting delegations from China, Europe and the USA. The department also worked with Innovation PEI to coordinate a buyers program to coincide with the PEI International Shellfish Festival.

China Lobster Market Development

The department participated in a joint market development initiative with Innovation PEI and the New Brunswick Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, in partnership with Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

In November 2010, a Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick contingent travelled to China with the mandate of promoting the development of a frozen lobster market in selected locations in China. The cities selected were Shanghai, Hangzhou and Dalian, as well as a visit to Beijing. In addition, the group participated in the 2010 China Fisheries and Seafood Expo in Dalian, the largest seafood show in Asia.

International Boston Seafood Show

Minister Neil LeClair led a delegation of Prince Edward Island seafood businesses, trade officials and industry stakeholders to the International Boston Seafood Show from March 20 - 22, 2011. The show is the largest seafood exposition in North America, attracting approximately 18,000 buyers and sellers from around the world.

The Boston Seafood Show represents an outstanding opportunity to showcase the high quality and value of Prince Edward Island's seafood products, connect with existing customers and develop new and expanded markets.

European Seafood Exposition

The department, in collaboration with Innovation PEI, along with a delegation of Prince Edward Island seafood businesses, trade officials and industry stakeholders attended the European Seafood Exposition from April 27-29, 2010. The show is the largest seafood trade fair in the world drawing buyers and sellers from 144 countries. The European Seafood Exposition continues to be the most important event for companies looking to enter and access the European seafood market.

Seafood Promotion

Prince Edward Island International Shellfish Festival

The department once again sponsored and was actively involved with the organization of another very successful Prince Edward Island International Shellfish Festival held from September 16-19. The festival was co-hosted by the Prince Edward Island Shellfish Association and the Prince Edward Island Aquaculture Alliance. The Shellfish Festival has grown into one of the largest promotions of shellfish in Eastern Canada.

Minister's Shellfish Recognition Award

Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development Minister, Neil LeClair, presented the 2010 Provincial Minister's Shellfish Recognition Awards to two leading members of the shellfish industry. Harold and Ruth Tuplin and Triple M Mussels Inc. were presented the awards during the opening of the Prince Edward Island International Shellfish Festival in Charlottetown. The shellfish recognition awards are presented annually to individuals for their success and leadership in shellfish harvesting, culturing, processing or marketing.

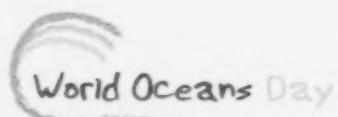
Out of the Sea and Over the Coals

The department's seafood promotion program, Out of the Sea and Over the Coals, had another successful summer in 2010. This program has been in operation for over 20 years, bringing the sizzling taste of seafood from the barbecue to thousands of visitors and Islanders. In 2010, the program hosted over 55 events at exhibitions, fairs, festivals, national and provincial parks, and venues such as Confederation Landing Park and Spinnaker's Landing. The events were professionally demonstrated by two university students and attracted over 2,500 people visiting Prince Edward Island from across Canada, the United States and Europe.



World Oceans Day

World Oceans Day is aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the importance of the oceans which surround Prince Edward Island and the marine life which inhabits them. World Oceans Day has been designated by the United Nations to celebrate oceans and society's connection to the sea. The Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development and Fisheries and Oceans Canada has partnered for the past five years to bring a World Oceans Day event to local schools.



On June 8, 2010 grade 8 students at the Souris Consolidated School celebrated World Oceans Day by joining Department and DFO representatives at Basin Head Fisheries Museum for an educational tour and beach seine. In the week leading up to the event students had an opportunity to prepare a piece of art celebrating our oceans and on event day they were able to showcase their art.

AQUACULTURE DIVISION

The division's mandate is to provide high quality advice, assistance and information to the Prince Edward Island shellfish and finfish aquaculture sectors.

The Aquaculture Division provided program assistance to support the growth and sustainability of aquaculture businesses and to encourage the adoption of new technology. As well, the division administered programs and services to support the Island's estuarine shellfish fishery. In 2010, the landed value of shellfish and finfish products such as mussels, oysters, clams and salmonids was approximately \$30 million. Employment in the sector was represented by more than 2,500 jobs.

The activities and programs delivered by staff in the past year were diverse including: providing technical and biological advice to the shellfish and finfish sectors, delivering a number of incentive programs that complemented technical services and assisted in the overall development of the aquaculture sector, actively participating on several national committees and working groups, and advocating for the Prince Edward Island aquaculture industry.

Mussel Monitoring Program

The Aquaculture Division has delivered an annual Mussel Monitoring Program for mussel growers since 1982. Information for the program was collected from 33 areas, representing 21 river or bay systems, which are utilized for mussel spat collection and/or grow-out. The program assisted growers in the management of their lease sites by providing information on the timing of mussel spat-fall, mussel meat yields, water quality, tunicate larvae numbers and the presence of potentially toxic algal species. The majority of the program was conducted during the ice-free season, with a focus on mussel spat-fall prediction between May and August and monitoring for potentially harmful algae, from September to December. Meat yield analysis was conducted periodically on samples collected from under the ice in the winter months.

Information collected through the Mussel Monitoring Program was communicated to industry via internet, telephone, and the annually published Mussel Monitoring Report, available both in print and online. Please visit the mussel monitoring website at www.gov.pe.ca/go/musselmonitoring for further information.



Oyster Larvae Monitoring Program

During the summer of 2010, staff conducted an Oyster Larvae Monitoring Program. There were 19 oyster seed collection areas that were monitored, two to three times per week, from the first week of July, to the third week in August. Information on larvae size and abundance was collected and oyster spat collectors were placed at several of the major spat collection areas to monitor abundance and frequency of spat-fall. The results were reported to industry using a voicemail system, through presentations at the industry meetings and in a summary report at year-end. Industry members use the information to determine the optimal time to deploy their collectors in order to optimize the amount of oysters they collect. In addition, the program information is used to compare recruitment information from different locations around Prince Edward Island and to provide information to industry on alternate areas that can be used to collect oysters.



Aquatic Invasive Species

Since 1997, six marine aquatic invasive species have been detected in the waters surrounding Prince Edward Island. These invasive species, which are negatively impacting the shellfish industry, include the oyster thief (*Codium fragile*), the green crab (*Carcinus maenas*), the clubbed tunicate (*Styela clava*), the golden star tunicate (*Botryllus schlosseri*), the violet tunicate (*Botrylloides violaceus*) and the vase tunicate (*Ciona intestinalis*). The mussel industry has been significantly affected by impacts from tunicate fouling on crop and equipment. The green crab has also impacted shellfish species, particularly populations of soft-shelled clams in the eastern portion of Prince Edward Island, and the eel fishery by damaging eel nets and captured eels. Another invasive species, the oyster drill (*Urosalpinx cinerea*), which was introduced into Prince Edward Island waters in the early 1900's, is increasing in its population size and is impacting both cultured and wild oysters.

Field Projects Related to Aquatic Invasive Species

Staff monitored mussel producing areas on a weekly basis during the ice-free season for the presence and quantity of tunicate larvae. The information collected was made available to industry to help growers manage tunicate fouling on their farms. This activity was carried out as part of the service provided to the industry through the Mussel Monitoring Program.

Staff also monitored adult populations of tunicates during the field season. The monitoring has shown that the vase tunicate continues to be the dominant invasive species of concern in Montague River, Brudenell River, St. Mary's Bay, Murray River, Cardigan River and Boughton River systems. In 2010, staff detected low numbers of the vase tunicate in the Souris River area. Mussel growers in the Darnley Basin and the March Water area of Malpeque Bay are managing large populations of the clubbed tunicate, however, populations remain light in New London Bay and in the Bideford River. The Bideford River is an important oyster seed producing area and staff carefully monitored this area to determine potential impacts on oyster seed collection. Staff spent time monitoring for the presence of invasive tunicates in the Foxley River area, where the clubbed tunicate was detected in 2007. Invasive tunicates were not detected during the monitoring and have not been detected in this area for the past two years. Subsequently, the area was reclassified from restricted for shellfish transfers to an unrestricted classification, which allows for the unrestricted movement of shellfish from this area.

Several of the north shore bays including Tracadie Bay, St. Peter's Bay and Savage Harbour along with Nine Mile Creek on the south shore remain heavily infested with the two colonial tunicates, the golden star tunicate and the violet tunicate. Colonial tunicates were detected in the Alberton Harbour area, Lennox Channel and Covehead/Brackley Bay for the first time in 2010. The monitoring results were presented to the Aquatic Invasive Species Steering Committee and to the Introductions and Transfers Tunicate Subcommittee.

In September, 2010, staff of the Aquaculture Division participated in a rapid assessment exercise for invasive tunicate species in Nine Mile Creek, which was coordinated by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Staff continued to work with industry members to assess tunicate control equipment that was developed through funding from various programs funded by the department, the federal government and the aquaculture industry.

Division staff participated in a Tunicate Equipment Workshop and presented the findings of their studies conducted on the effectiveness of the treatment equipment developed by industry. Following the presentation, industry members were given an opportunity to observe several pieces of tunicate treatment equipment in operation in the Georgetown Harbour area.

Information on the efficacy of the equipment is important to both industry and to governments, as we continue to collaborate to determine the best tunicate management systems. Information collected on the equipment was presented to industry members at meetings and at annual tunicate workshops. A report on the equipment produced is available.

Staff worked on a project with industry members in Boughton River to assess the management techniques being used to control the vase tunicate on their farm. Multiple treatments utilizing high-pressure water were assessed to determine the optimum treatment regime.

An appropriate mitigation response to minimize the potential risk of transferring colonial tunicates from an infested area to an area free of colonial tunicates is to immerse the seed to be transferred in flow-through freshwater for a period of 24 hours. At the request of the Aquatic Invasive Species Steering Committee, a study was conducted to determine if reduced freshwater exposure would have the same effect on the tunicates. Staff experimented with a six hour exposure in 2009 at a commercial treatment scale, however, a small amount of colonial tunicates remained viable following the freshwater treatment. In 2010, a trial to assess a 12 hour freshwater exposure was conducted however, results were comparable to the 6 hour freshwater exposure with a small amount of tunicates remaining viable. As a result, the current treatment regime, to immerse mussel seed in flow-through freshwater for a period of 24 hours, is still required when transferring seed from an area infested with colonial tunicates to an area free of colonial tunicates.

The division conducted an annual trapping survey to determine the distribution of the green crab in Prince Edward Island waters. The green crab population is prevalent in the bays and rivers in Eastern Prince Edward Island and has increased its distribution along the north shore to include Covehead Bay, Tracadie Bay and Southwest River. This species has been detected as far west as Enmore River on the south shore. The size of the population of this species continues to increase, especially in the eastern portion of the province. The green crab is an aggressive crab that preys on shellfish and other crustaceans.

The Aquaculture Division partnered with the PEI Aquaculture Alliance (PEIAA), the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to review the work that has been conducted on aquatic invasive tunicate species in order to identify the most promising techniques and to develop a plan for future needs. The report will also develop recommendations for the industry to acquire the resources and techniques required should the vase tunicate spread to north shore bays. In addition, the report is to provide a cost analysis of the treatments currently being utilized for the vase tunicate in eastern PEI. The report is being finalized.

Committees and Working Groups Related to Aquatic Invasive Species

Staff of the Aquaculture Division have been active members on the **Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers National Aquatic Invasive Species Committee**. In 2009, the Ministers responsible for fisheries and aquaculture recognized that a long term commitment was required to address the national issues related to aquatic invasive species and transitioned the CCFAM Task Group on Aquatic Invasive Species to the permanent committee, with a mandate to work on national initiatives related to aquatic invasive species. The committee continues to meet regularly to address national issues, such as public awareness and communication and reports back to the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers on an annual basis.

Division staff are members on the **Introductions and Transfers Committee** and the **Introductions and Transfers Tunicate Subcommittee**, which are both chaired by staff of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The Introductions and Transfers Committee makes decisions on the introductions and transfers of aquatic organisms being transferred into Prince Edward Island waters. The Introductions and Transfers Tunicate Subcommittee provides advice to the Introductions and Transfers Committee on issues around restrictions placed on shellfish transfers, as a result of tunicate infestations. The purpose of the restrictions is to prevent or slow the spread of tunicate species that may occur as a result of the shellfish transfers and other water based activities.

The Aquaculture Division also participated on the **Aquatic Invasive Species Steering Committee**, along with staff from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, academia and industry members. The committee meets to provide direction for communication, monitoring and research activities related to aquatic invasive species on Prince Edward Island, and to provide support to the Introductions and Transfers Committee.

Staff also represented Atlantic Canada as members of the **Board of Directors for the Canadian Aquatic Invasive Species Network**. This board provides direction on funding for research projects related to aquatic invasive species, under the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. Several projects have been funded in Atlantic Canada on aquatic invasive species through this network.

The department partnered with Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Atlantic Veterinary College and industry, to provide funding and to set direction for a research project funded under the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's Atlantic Innovation Fund. The project involves the development of techniques and mitigation strategies for invasive tunicate species fouling mussel farms. The project was awarded to the Prince Edward Island Aquaculture Alliance and the research for the project is being conducted by the Atlantic Veterinary College. As part of this project, the division staff played an important role in a study to determine the potential of utilizing modified nozzles under water to remove the vase tunicate from mussels.

Stanley Bridge Ice Clearing Project

Over the last few years changing weather patterns have resulted in longer periods of time when ice conditions may be too weak to permit mussel harvesting equipment on the ice, but too thick to break up using boats. In late winter and early spring of 2011 snow and ice conditions resulted in the inability of growers to harvest product, which resulted in a shortage of product available for the market place. The Aquaculture Division partnered with the Stanley Bridge Harbour Authority to determine if breaking a channel through the ice, utilizing a specialized dredge that could operate on thin ice, would be effective to allow growers to use boats to keep the channel open and provide access to leases for the harvest of mussels. This equipment may be an option for growers to clear ice and allow for boat harvest in periods of weak ice conditions in the future.

Oyster Shellbed Cultivation Project

Staff conducted trials over the past five years, in partnership with the Prince Edward Island Shellfish Association (PEISA), to assess the impact of shellbed cultivation on wild oyster beds in West River. Cultivation has been considered beneficial to enhance oyster spat settlement, by exposing the clean shell for oyster larvae settlement. The aim of these trials was to explore the effectiveness of cultivation of oyster beds on spat collection and to determine if there were any negative impacts on the wild oysters. The study was completed this year and the final results presented at the PEISA's Annual Shellfish Seminar.

Evaluation of the Relay of Oysters

Staff collaborated with the Prince Edward Island Shellfish Association to determine appropriate locations for the relay of juvenile oysters and to determine the growth and performance of the relayed oysters. The relay of one and two year old juvenile oysters to public oyster beds is an important part of the Prince Edward Island Shellfish Association's Oyster Enhancement Program. Staff deployed juvenile oysters in the spring of 2008 at several test-site locations. Over the summer and fall of 2009 and 2010, the oysters were collected, measured and re-deployed. The project will continue until the oysters reach market size to determine growth and mortality rates.

Study of the Impact of Crawling to Harvest Quahaugs on Oysters

Staff collaborated with staff from Department of Fisheries and Oceans to conduct a study to determine if fishing quahaugs by hand harvest and crawling over oyster beds will have a negative impact on the oyster populations. The study was conducted to assist DFO in the management of the quahaug fishery in North River where hand harvest is not currently permitted.

Strategic Oyster Aquaculture Renewal Program

The department partnered with ACOA and the PEIAA to provide funding for the Strategic Aquaculture Renewal Program. The Program provided an incentive for oyster growers to increase oyster production and improve quality through the adoption of techniques or technologies to produce oysters on their leases. The program provided 50% assistance to growers for projects for new or modified equipment for seed collection, nursery and grow out operations and for harvesting oysters on leases. The program is being delivered by the PEI Aquaculture Alliance and will provide \$1,000,000 in funding for projects over three years. The program ends in March of 2012.

Oyster Diseases – Multinucleated Sphere Unknown (MSX) and Seaside Organism (SSO)

Aquaculture staff continued to work closely with officials from Fisheries and Oceans Canada to monitor oyster stocks throughout Prince Edward Island for the presence of MSX and SSO parasites. MSX was

identified in the Bras D'or Lakes, Nova Scotia, in 2002, but has never been identified in Prince Edward Island oysters. SSO was found in Island oysters in 2002, at non-threatening levels and has not been detected since. Importing oysters from MSX positive areas in Nova Scotia is prohibited by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Staff play an active role in partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, to investigate and determine the causes of shellfish mortalities.

Oyster Production Analysis Report

The department partnered with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency to support the PEI Aquaculture Alliance to conduct a study to determine the current and future oyster production in PEI. The purpose of the study was to analyze numbers and grades of oysters to be landed over the next few years and to determine if a marketing strategy is required. The information is important to industry to ensure there are adequate markets for the product from the expanding oyster aquaculture sector.

Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program

Division staff assisted the federal partners responsible for the delivery of the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program. Staff also are members of the Prince Edward Island Shellfish Working Group and the Atlantic Region Interdepartmental Shellfish Committee, where issues related to the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program and closures to shellfish harvest areas as a result of potential contamination, are discussed. The Aquaculture Division is also represented on the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers Committee that discuss national issues that are under the mandate of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, including issues related to the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program. Staff routinely assist in sample collection to ensure areas that become closed due to potential contamination, may be reopened as quickly as possible.

Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program / Waste Water Treatment Plant Forum

The department partnered with the PEI Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry to establish a industry/government forum on issues related to the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program and waste water treatment plants. The forum is to be held in conjunction with the bi-annual meetings of the PEI Shellfish Working Group. The forum provides an opportunity for improved communications between the shellfish industry and the operators of the waste water treatment plants.

Conditional Shellfish Openings

Over the past several years, the division has collected water and shellfish samples to ensure that shellfish from the Vernon-Orwell River system and the Souris River system can be harvested on a conditional basis. In 2010, staff continued to work with shellfish leaseholders in these two river systems to maintain conditional openings for the harvest of oysters, quahogs and clams. The conditional openings are a joint effort of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Environment Canada, the department and affected shellfish growers.

Assistance Programs

Two incentive programs, the Aquaculture Technology Program and the Aquaculture Environmental Practices Program, were delivered by the division to the aquaculture sector. Six projects were approved under the Aquaculture Technology Program, representing a government contribution of \$48,000 and one project was approved under the Environmental Practices Program, representing a government contribution of \$10,000. These programs assisted the industry to evaluate new technologies and improve the environmental sustainability of aquaculture operations.

A total of \$100,000 was approved for the Prince Edward Island Shellfish Association to carry out oyster enhancement activities on public fishing grounds. Projects included seed collection, oyster relays and shell spreading. The enhancement activities are carried out with the goal to improve oyster quality and increase the acreage of public oyster grounds. The Prince Edward Island Shellfish Association cost-shared the oyster enhancement activities and delivered the program with technical assistance from staff of the Aquaculture Division. The long-term commitment of the department to the enhancement of the public oyster fishery has resulted in increased landings and opportunities for oyster fishers.

The division continued to support the Atlantic Veterinary College's Shellfish Research Program. A contribution by the division provided the Atlantic Veterinary College with the necessary infrastructure and research support to attract funding and conduct research projects identified by, and relevant to, the Island shellfish industry.

Aquaculture Leasing Program

The department continued, in partnership with the aquaculture industry, to provide management advice to Fisheries and Oceans Canada for delivery of the Aquaculture Leasing Program. The department has membership on the Lease Management Board, which oversees development of work plans, financial plans, and the policy framework of the program. The Aquaculture Division has representation on the Leasing Referral Committee and provides advice on applications for new aquaculture sites and other transactions. Under the Aquaculture Leasing Program, Fisheries and Oceans Canada makes the final decision on leasing matters however, the industry and province have a role in management decisions. All parties contribute financially to the program.

Adaptive Management - Environmental Monitoring Program

Staff of the Aquaculture Division are members of the Adaptive Management Committee that reports to the Lease Management Board. The committee is chaired by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (Habitat Division) and includes representation from the aquaculture industry. The purpose of this committee is to respond to emerging issues in the aquaculture industry and provide solutions, as necessary. Division staff implemented an Environmental Monitoring Program as part of the department's commitment to the Adaptive Management Committee, which included benthic monitoring and shellfish productivity monitoring.

National Aquatic Animal Health Program

The National Aquatic Animal Health Program is a fish health program, designed to protect Canadian farmed and wild fish stocks and Canadian export markets. The development of the National Aquatic Animal Health Program is led by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, in cooperation with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Staff have participated in consultations on regulatory changes to the *Health of Animals Act* that are required by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to manage the program. The regulatory changes, (includes the addition of aquatic animals to the *Health of Animals Act*), came into effect on December of 2011. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency now requires import permits for the importation of all aquatic animals into Canada. From December 2011 to December 2012 there will be a transitional period where permits will be requested, but imports will still be allowed if the importer does not have the permits required, as long as no health concerns exist. After December 2012 no imports will be approved without the proper permitting in place. Over the next two years the program will be expanded to include permitting for movements of aquatic animals within Canada, based on presence/absence of listed diseases. Staff also participated on the National Aquatic Animal Health Committee, which provides input to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for the program

development. For more information on the National Aquatic Animal Health Program, please visit the website at www.inspection.gc.ca/english/direct/naahp.

Sustainable Aquaculture Program

The division worked with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and other provinces under the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers, in the development of the federally funded Sustainable Aquaculture Program, for the Canadian aquaculture industry. Fisheries and Oceans Canada announced \$70 million in funding for the program in 2008, which is to be delivered over a five year period and is directed to regulatory reform and governance, regulatory science (to support regulations), innovation (reduction of production costs, industry competitiveness, new species and green technology), and product certification.

Staff of the Aquaculture Division are active members on the Strategic Management Committee, which provides Fisheries and Oceans Canada with input on this program and other matters related to aquaculture.

National Aquaculture Strategic Action Planning Initiative

Fisheries and Oceans Canada began the development of the National Aquaculture Strategic Action Planning Initiative, with the mandate to develop a plan for the further development of aquaculture in Canada. This planning initiative will identify and develop plans to address the strategic initiatives that are required by the Canadian industry for further development. Division staff are working closely with the Prince Edward Island industry, to identify priorities for the industry and to ensure that they will be included as part of the National Aquaculture Strategic Action Planning Initiative. The development of this initiative falls under the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers Strategic Management Committee for aquaculture.

Aquaculture Implementation Committee

The Aquaculture Division collaborated with DFO and the PEI Aquaculture Alliance to re-establish the Aquaculture Implementation Committee. This committee will meet bi-annually and includes representation from DFO, the department, the PEI Aquaculture Alliance, the PEI Cultured Mussel Growers Association, the Island Oyster Growers Group, the PEI Finfish Growers Association, the Seafood Processors Association and the PEI Shellfish Association. Environment Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency are also members of the committee. The committee is responsible to prioritize actions under the National Aquaculture Strategic Action Plan as related to the development of aquaculture in PEI and to address other important issues to the PEI aquaculture industry.

Memorandum of Agreement on Aquaculture in Atlantic Canada

In 2008, provincial Ministers responsible for the development of aquaculture in Atlantic Canada, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work cooperatively to develop aquaculture in Atlantic Canada. Issues that will be addressed under the memorandum include aquatic invasive species, fish health management, coordination in research and development, investment in aquaculture, regional marketing and promotion, training, education and harmonization of regulations. Division staff are members of the Atlantic Canada MOU Committee that is working to address the priorities identified under the Memorandum of Understanding.

Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers (CCFAM) and Atlantic Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister (ACFAM)

The Canadian and Atlantic Councils of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers' met on November 9, 2010 in St John's, Newfoundland. The Honourable Clyde Jackman, Minister of the Newfoundland Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture co-chaired the meetings with the Honourable Gail Shea, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The CCFAM Ministers agreed to work collaboratively on aquaculture, trade, seafood traceability and aquatic invasive species. The Minister's endorsed the National Aquaculture Strategic Action Plan Initiative, recognizing the importance of aquaculture to economy of the coastal communities in Canada, and the potential to expand the industry in a sustainable manner. The Minister's agreed to continue work on addressing international requirements for seafood certification and traceability.

The ACFAM Ministers agreed to work together on improved marketing and development of the seal industry and on the implementation of the lobster support package, from an industry viability perspective.

The Ministers discussed the work completed by the various task groups and approved the task group work plans for 2010/2011.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

The division's mandate is to provide quality advice, assistance and information to rural clients and develop new approaches to community development and delivery of employment programs.

The Rural Action Plan – A Rural Economic Development Strategy for Prince Edward Island is a framework of seven goals and 40 actions intended to focus on existing and new efforts to develop the rural economy. To review the full *Rural Action Plan*, please visit: www.gov.pe.ca/go/ruralactionplan.



Much was completed over the first year of implementation and the actions underway or completed will be summarized as they relate to each goal. Of the 40 actions identified in the Rural Action Plan, a total of 30 have now been completed or are underway. Plans are being developed to address the other 10 actions.

Goal 1 Enhancing Business Development

The first Rural Action Centre was established in Montague. Work is nearing completion on the opening of centres in Bedeque and Alberton, and satellite offices in Souris and Wellington.



Goal 2 Strengthen Primary Sectors and Natural Resources

Many of these initiatives were started previous to the release of the *Rural Action Plan* and will continue over this fiscal budget period. The following lists actions that have been completed or are underway.

Funding has been provided to assist the agriculture industry to diversify, create a three-year research program to evaluate soybean varieties and to develop on-farm renewable energy systems. A Low Interest Loan Program has been established for all eligible fishers and a Future Fishers Program has been developed in Prince Edward Island. With the federal government an investment is being made into the development of new fish products, processing technologies and markets. Plans have been completed to rationalize fishery areas such as LFA 25 and sustainability plans in LFAs 24 and 26A. Support has increased for oyster enhancement programs in public and private leases. Proposals have been accepted to supply biomass-based heat for five public buildings and a province-wide forest inventory is currently underway.

Goal 3 Expanding Tourism

The following actions have been completed. A province-wide Fall Flavours Festival has been established to promote events and visitation to the rural areas and the Culinary Alliance has been established to promote Prince Edward Island cuisine to visitors and expand export markets for food products.

Goal 4 Environmental Conservation and the Rural Economy

The provincial government has adopted the recommendations of the Commission on Nitrates in Groundwater, including the expansion of Provincial Watershed Program and the delivery of the Alternative Land Use Services Program. Amendments have been made to the Lands Protection Act to exempt environmentally sensitive land, wetlands, forested areas, hedgerows, grassed headlands and buffer zones from aggregate landholdings.

Goal 5 Support Community Development and Capacity Building

A number of actions are underway or completed under goal 5. Legislation was passed during the fall session of the legislature to establish community economic development investment funds. The Community Accounts initiative has been established providing rural communities with much-needed access to data and statistics to support economic, cultural and social development. Three regional development forums were held over the past year to support and encourage information sharing between the three identified rural regions of PEI. The Rural Jobs Initiative Program has invested approximately \$5 million in the past three years to assist businesses and organizations to employ additional staff and broaden their job experiences. In 2010 investments of more than \$50 million were made to upgrade infrastructure on Prince Edward Island.

Goal 6 Human Resources, Education and Essential Services

Several actions were undertaken and completed such as the construction of health clinics and centres in rural areas; the planning and construction of educational facilities; the introduction of kindergarten programs and a new provincial child care program; the establishment of a community internship program; a rural youth conference was held in the spring of 2010 to focus on rural young people; and an investment in a post secondary facility in West Prince.

Goal 7 One Island Community, One Island Future

This goal has one action – to address the challenges in the identified sub-regions of Prince Edward Island. As part of this action, the Department of Education and Early Childhood has moved to Summerside and sections of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal moved to Tignish.

A *Progress Report – Rural Action Plan* was released on April 7, 2011. The complete document can be found at www.gov.pe.ca/ruralactionplan.

Programs

Community Development Program

The Community Development Program contributed to initiatives which helped strengthen local communities. Sustainable projects which had a high degree of community involvement were assisted. Community involvement was measured in a variety of ways such as volunteers who contribute their time and/or expertise, fund raising monetary contributions via local businesses and organizations, and arranging multiple funding partnerships.

In 2010/2011, 14 projects were approved under CDP, with a total contribution of \$332,724. These projects had a total monetary value of over \$1.7 million.



Island Community Fund

As part of the Rural Action Plan, the Island Community Fund became a development resource to assist the needs of rural communities.

The Island Community Fund is a six year initiative designed to provide funding to not for profit organizations, development groups and municipal governments to develop and implement initiatives that address the province's infrastructure needs. Urban and rural projects are eligible, however a focus was placed on infrastructure needs in rural areas.

The fund gives priority to capital projects which improve rural capacity, support regional and provincial priorities, and encourage retention and growth in rural communities.

In 2010/2011, ICF approved \$3,465,815 in funding initiatives. A total of 65 projects across the Island were assisted, reflecting a total project value of over \$17.4 million.

Regional Development Support Program

This program assisted community based development organizations in various locations across the Island. Assistance accommodated essential gap funding in support of planning and sustaining community initiatives.

In 2010/2011, 13 projects were approved under the program, with a total contribution of \$149,312. The funding was used to support studies and to assist in the planning and development of the applicant's business and economic plans.

Community Capacity Fund

The Community Capacity Fund supported leadership development in community areas and enabled volunteers to plan development initiatives at the local level. Organizations were assisted with professional services, volunteer training, incorporation fees, newsletters, annual meetings and forums, surveys, business or design plans, and development strategies.

Thirteen projects were approved under the program, with a total contribution of \$18,700.

Seasonal Hiring Centre

The Seasonal Hiring Centre assists the various government departments in filling seasonal employment vacancies. The Centre advises departments on proper hiring procedures and manages an employee selection and referral service. The Seasonal Hiring Centre assisted with the staffing of 82 positions during this report period.



ACCESS PEI

Access PEI's mission statement is to provide high quality and efficient delivery of provincial government services to rural and urban clients.

Access PEI was created in February 2003 under the Department of Development and Technology. It became a part of the Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development in May 2008.

The purpose of the division is to provide quality services to Islanders through single window access to government programs, services and information. Islanders also access information through several hundred thousand telephone calls that are received and handled on an annual basis.



At Access PEI, customers have access to over 350 government services including: payment of property taxes; remittance of sales tax; renewing drivers licences; renewing vehicle registrations; obtaining marriage licences; obtaining fishing licences; and availability of government job application forms.

In 2010/2011 Access PEI served 190,177 customers and performed 279,842 transactions across the 8 Access PEI sites.

Customers per Site

Date	Site	Customers	Percentage
2010/11	Alberton	6584	3.46
2010/11	Charlottetown	82673	43.47
2010/11	Montague	19724	10.37
2010/11	O'Leary	7753	4.08
2010/11	Souris	14337	7.54
2010/11	Summerside	47562	25.01
2010/11	Tignish	5974	3.14
2010/11	Wellington	5570	2.93

Access PEI is the public face of government throughout Prince Edward Island providing Islanders with access to provincial government programs and services on behalf of all government departments. The division also provides administrative support to other provincial government departments within the eight sites.

There are eight Access PEI sites that provide a full range of government services to Islanders.



Work is ongoing on the two year development of the next phase of a comprehensive computer system that will make it easier for staff to deliver Highway Safety programs and services. This is a cooperative effort between Access PEI, Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and IT Shared Services. The intent of the system is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Access PEI's operations by providing staff with the detailed information on the steps required to conduct various programs and services.

Staff training is conducted on an ongoing basis to ensure that staff is familiar with the procedures involved in the delivery of programs and services. On an annual basis, the Director of Access PEI meets with other departmental directors responsible for the programs and services delivered by Access PEI. This is a valuable tool in providing feedback to the departments for which Access PEI delivers services.

In the fall of 2010 the first annual Access PEI staff conference was held for all staff across the Island. Due to the nature of the business the event had to be held on a Saturday. The theme of the conference was "Customer Service Excellence". The event was a success and future events will concentrate on preparing staff to offer the best service possible to Islanders.

